

God Is Government

Isaiah 33:22

*“For the LORD is our judge, the  
LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD  
is our king; he will save us.”*



## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MANKIND

### PART NINETEEN

*“31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

- John 6:31-32

A complete, well-developed understanding of God’s Word is always important. Seemingly small misunderstandings and errors can cause a surprising amount of damage – not just in our own lives, but in the lives of those we touch.



This earthly life we live (Life Eternal – Heaven of Earth) does not come without some pitfalls in our walk with Christ. John tells about Christ as our advocate in 1 John.

*“1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”*

- 1 John 2:1-6

Why would we need an advocate on our behalf because we are sinners, and we will sin in this life? In other words, this physical life will not be free from pitfalls.

#### **Pitfall 1: Works vs. Righteousness**

In many churches, there is an emphasis to repent and rededicate one’s life, as though congregants have to regain the salvation which they have lost in the course of daily life. People in this position typically have no assurance of their salvation. They get “saved” every week because they have no rest in Christ. They have no spiritual

peace, and right away that should be a signal that something is wrong, because those things were promised to us.

*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

- John 14:27

On the other hand, it is a veritable plague when we find Christians who have convinced themselves they have reached a state of sinless perfection. This is contrary to 1 John 1:

*“8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

- 1 John 1:8-9

We cannot allow a sense of spiritual superiority to infect us, misdirecting us from our calling as Christians. We are to be the light of the world, filled with the mercy of God through the Holy Spirit. We should be ministering to a broken and suffering world, serving as God’s hands to people who need to know His kindness and forgiveness and life-saving power. We cannot do that job – and we actually cause serious damage – if we are wrapped up in our own pride. There is no place for self-righteousness in the kingdom of God.

A works-equals-righteousness kind of theology leads to fear and insecurity, or pride and haughtiness. These are not the fruits we should produce as God’s children. Many believers live in needless fear, because they wonder time and again whether they are truly saved. These imagine that God is rubbing a hole through their names in the Book of Life after repeatedly erasing and rewriting it. Each time they sin, every time they discover anything un-Christlike in themselves, anytime they feel emotionally separated from God, they worry they have lost their salvation.

We need to understand how vastly God values us. When we turn away from Him, He longs for us as a father long for His children. He wants us to be with Him always, and He wants nothing more than for us to come home to Him. We do not understand that, like the prodigal son. He rejoices to run to us and throw His arms around us. He has a robe and a fatted calf just waiting for us.

The fact is that you and I can know for certain that we are God's children. We can have confidence that our sins have been forgiven, and our destiny is an eternity in Heaven with Him. This was all done before the foundation of the world.

*“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

- Ephesians 1:3-14

The Lord does not want us to doubt His love. He does not want us to trust in our own efforts. We absolutely cannot earn our own salvation, and if we cannot earn it, we cannot maintain it.

Can we grieve the Father? Yes. Can we destroy opportunities for rewards? Yes. However, our sins were paid 100% by Jesus Christ on the cross (Again as planned before the foundation of the world). His last words ‘It is finished,’ tell us that our debts were paid in full.

## **Pitfall 2: Negligence**

The focus on election, on the other hand, has led Calvinists to ignore or even oppose evangelism. What is the use? If we are foreordained for salvation, then why go through the trouble of harvest crusades? If God choose who is saved and who is not, then why send young people as missionaries to lands afflicted by tsetse flies and

malaria? The determinism that is implied by an overemphasis of election can lead to hyper-Calvinists fighting against evangelistic crusades and missions.

A deterministic view of the world leads to strife, division and argumentation. There are more efforts addressed to calming tensions than loving and caring for a hurtful world. The overemphasis of God's sovereignty, at the expense of man's responsibility, portrays a God who is willing to capriciously torture the unsuspecting.

The river of life flows between two banks of extremes. The whole dilemma of this controversy of fate versus free will is that it fails to focus on God's objective. His objective is to have a people that love and trust Him.

The answer is balance – but not just balance. The answer is seeking the heart of God. It is hungering and thirsting for Him, trusting in His love and His purposes. It is recognizing that God's will is greater than anything we could ever imagine and handling Him our sovereignty. It is saying every day, "Father, my life belongs to You. Lead me today. Show me how to be Your hands to my family and friends. Show me how to reach out to this lost and dying world."

### **The Seven Letters**

We can do a study of the errors in church history. As we look into the past, we discover each error is built on a lack of balance.

I am fascinated with the seven letters of seven churches in the book of Revelation Chapters 2 & 3. Jesus Christ dictated to John a set of seven report cards for churches in Asia Minor, and I believe all seven churches were surprised by what they heard. Some thought they were doing worse than they were, while some thought they were doing better. Two of the churches had only good said about them. Two of the churches had nothing good said about them. Three had both good things and things they needed to work on. All were churches who claimed the name of Jesus Christ, yet five of them had problems they needed to address.

These seven letters were written to actual churches in the first century. These were real churches with real problems. Each letter has the phrase, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," however, which tells us they were meant to admonish the churches to whom they were addressed, but also were meant to be heard by all the churches. The letters seem to have an additional level: representing the church age

and the problems we find in different church periods throughout the past 2000 years. The seven letters write our church history in advance, which I find fascinating.

These letters also speak to all of us individually. We can see ourselves in these churches, and the warnings and promises Jesus Christ gives them are the same warnings and promises He could give us. The church of Ephesus was patient, hard-working, and dedicated to the truth. Jesus had one thing against them – they had laid aside the love with which they had started following Christ. Jesus tells them to get that love back. We can all take heed to those words. In all our work of “doing church” we cannot forget that loving our God, loving our Savior, loving the people for whom Christ died – that is the center of it all.

These seven letters are valuable to study. Read Revelation 2-3 and carefully examine the things Jesus said to each church. Pay attention to the titles Jesus gives Himself in each letter, His words of praise and admonition. His warnings and promises. I encourage you to read up on the history of each of these churches and their particular struggles.

This is one of the reasons, by the way, I do not take the writings of the early church leaders necessarily as inspired truth. I trust the writings of the apostles, sent by Christ Himself to spread the Gospel to the world. However, we can see from the time John wrote Revelation in A.D. 96 that most of the churches were already off the mark. The early church fathers offer some interesting reading, and their writings give us historical insight. However, we should not build doctrines from them. We build our doctrines from the Word of God.